

# The Test of Putting God First—Is God Right?

1 Kings 17:8-16

We have been learning the first principle of stewardship is **putting God first** (Mt. 6:33; Prov. 3:9; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:5).

This principle is illustrated in the story of the widow at Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:8-16 (read).

Have you ever considered how God sometimes asks us to do what is humanly illogical? Consider how illogical it was for Elijah to go to Zidon.

1. The DROUGHT—Food and water was scarce. But, God can supply in the midst of drought.
2. The DISTANCE—100 miles away and he was traveling by foot!
3. The DANGER—Zidon—the center of Baal worship. Right in the middle of enemy territory—The domain of Jezebel's daddy (cf. 16:31). Nevertheless, Elijah obeyed.

Now, consider about how illogical it was for the widow to give to the needs of Elijah.

1. Her DESPAIR—She Her situation was hopeless. She was about to starve.
2. Her DEFICIENCY— **Is it logical** to give when you little to give?

➤ But the question is **NOT** “is it logical?” The real question is: “**Is God right?**” Was God right or wrong to ask the widow to give? How you answer that question is the key to putting God first.

- If we believe God **is right** we will put God first—even in the tithe.
- If we believe God **is wrong**—what are we doing here?

➤ **FOUR PRINCIPLES of putting God first:**

**I. When we put God first—We POSSESS our possessions** (vs. 10-12).

- A. FIRST REQUEST for water was accepted without question.
- B. As she went for water, Elijah made the SECOND REQUEST for bread. Water must have been more available than flour and oil because the widow did not question the request for water... but she did for the piece of bread.

- C. Normally we give out of the abundance we have, but hesitate to give when we have very little.

When this woman gave out of her destitution, she received more than she had to begin with. Dr. David Jeremiah calls this the "Principle of the Open Hand." When your hand is open to God, He takes what He wants and puts back what you need.

- D. This is the difference between you possessing your possessions and your possessions possessing you. If God is first, you control your possessions. If you fail to put God first, your possessions control you.

*ge her, and r nning o er, hall men gi e in o o r bo om. 2  
Cor. 9:6—He hich o e h paringl hall reap al o paringl ;  
and he hich o e h bo n if ll hall reap al o bo n if ll .*

➡ That's God's promise. The question is: "**Is God right?**" If so, prove Him by putting Him first and give the tithe?

---

When Henry Parsons Crowell was a young man he prayed, "Lord, I'm going to start a business. Whatever money it makes, I will keep 10% and give You 90%." The company he founded was the Quaker Oats Company. He kept his word and died a wealthy man, even though he gave nine cents of every dime to the Lord.

---

#### **IV. When we put God first—We PLACE faith over sight** (vs. 15-16)

A. What God asked of the widow looked illogical to the eyes of sight. But faith does not require sight to "see" what God can do.

---

I can imagine what the widow may thought about Elijah's promise in verse 14 "Wait a minute... How about filling the barrel and the oil jar first—then I'll be happy to make you a cake." But the Lord doesn't work that way (Mt. 6:33; Mal 3:10).

---

B. The widow's eyes were lifted above the level of the flour and oil to the Lord who gave the promise of His Word (vs. 14-15).

C. If you live by trusting what you can see, you will never tithe. Tithing doesn't make sense logically.

➡ That is why we must act in faith (Heb. 11:6).

**SUMMATION:** God is not looking for legalistic giving. Remember God is more interested in **the giver** than the gift.

➡ As you complete your stewardship commitment card you will be indicating if you are truly putting God first in your life.

The question we need to ask ourselves in order to put God first is: "**Is God right?**" If you believe God is right, you'll put Him first. If you believe God is wrong, you won't. It's that simple!

#### **When you put God first...**

1. You **possess** your possessions
2. You **prepare** for the future.

3. You **put** God to work on your behalf
4. You **place** faith over sight.